

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently amended) A method of screening a substance efficacious for healing, preventing or treating a vascular disorder[[s]] resulting from abnormal uric acid uptake or elimination by URAT1 into a vascular smooth muscle cell, wherein the method comprises:

a. contacting a vascular smooth muscle cell with a test compound and urate;

b. measuring the level of uric acid uptake or elimination in the cell;
and

c. identifying the compound as a substance efficacious for healing, preventing or treating the vascular disorder when addition of the test compound reduces the level of uric acid uptake or increases the level of uric acid elimination in the cell

~~comprising using a cell line expressing URAT1 in the presence or absence of a test compound; and assaying the uric acid uptake level.~~

6. (Currently amended) The method according to claim ~~[[4]]~~ 5, wherein the ~~cell line expressing URAT1 is a cell line stably expressing URAT1 gene~~ is an umbilical vein epithelial cell.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently amended) A method of screening a substance efficacious for healing, preventing or treating a vascular disorder resulting from abnormal uric acid uptake or elimination by URAT1 into a vascular smooth muscle cell, wherein the method comprises:

a. contacting a vascular smooth muscle cell with a test compound and urate;

b. measuring the proliferation ability of the cell; and

c. identifying the compound as a substance efficacious for healing, preventing or treating the vascular disorder when addition of the test compound reduces the proliferation ability of the cell

~~comprising using a cell line expressing URAT1 in the presence or absence of a test compound; and assaying the proliferation ability of the cells.~~

9. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 8, wherein the proliferation ability of the cell[[s]] is assayed by measuring the thymidine uptake level [[by]] of the cell[[s]].

10. (Currently amended) A method of screening a substance efficacious for healing, preventing or treating a vascular disorder[[s]] resulting from abnormal uric acid uptake or elimination by URAT1 into a vascular smooth muscle cell, wherein the method comprises:

a. contacting a vascular smooth muscle cell with a test compound and urate;

b. measuring the amount of a monocyte chemotactic factor produced by the cell; and

c. identifying the compound as a substance efficacious for healing, preventing or treating the vascular disorder when addition of the test compound reduces the amount of the monocyte chemotactic factor produced by the cell

~~comprising using a cell line expressing URAT1 in the presence or absence of a test compound; and assaying the amount of a monocyte chemotactic factor produced by the cells.~~

11. (Original) The method according to claim 10, wherein the monocyte chemotactic factor is MCP-1.

12. (New) The method according to claim 8, wherein the cell is an umbilical vein epithelial cell.

13. (New) The method according to claim 10, wherein said cell is an umbilical vein epithelial cell.

14. (New) A method of screening a substance efficacious for healing, preventing or treating a vascular disorder resulting from abnormal uric acid uptake or elimination by URAT1 into a vascular smooth muscle cell, wherein the vascular disorder is not induced by hyperuricemia, and wherein the method comprises:

- a. contacting a vascular smooth muscle cell with a test compound and urate;
- b. measuring the level of uric acid uptake or elimination in the cell;
and
- c. identifying the compound as a substance efficacious for healing, preventing or treating the vascular disorder when addition of the test compound reduces the level of uric acid uptake or increases the level of uric acid elimination in the cell.